



Commission Meeting Minutes

March 10, 2021
Virtual, via Zoom
10:00 am-11:45 am

AGENDA	DIALOGUE	ACTION ITEMS
I. Chairman Myhre called the meeting to order at 10:00 am		
a. Roll Call	<p><u>Commission Members Present:</u> Chairman Myhre, Vice Chair Harbage, and Commissioners Juanita Vero, Kim Lloyd, Hadley Jackson, Karen Moses, Heather Margolis, Kevin Sylvester, Karin Olsen-Billings, Pamela Carbonari, Doug Mitchell, Morgan Hubbard, Amy Busch</p> <p><u>Members Excused:</u> Commissioners Eric Strauss, Jim Larson, Donavon Hawk</p> <p><u>Guests and Staff Present:</u></p> <p>Lieutenant Governor of Montana Kristen Juras</p> <p><i>AmeriCorps Program Staff:</i> Joe Naiman-Sessions, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Montana State Parks AmeriCorps Program Director; Dannette Fadness, Montana Campus Compact AmeriCorps Manager; Jono McKinney, Montana Conservation Corps President and CEO</p> <p><i>AmeriCorps Members, Leaders, and VISTAS:</i> David Mariani, Tessa McCarty, Julian Costantini, and Gabe Alderson with Montana Campus Compact AmeriCorps; Amanda Coyle, Ryan Martin, Rebekah Tueller with Montana State Parks AmeriCorps; Keaton Martin with Big Sky Watershed Corps; Tim Fontaine, AmeriCorps VISTA serving at Gratitude in Action in Billings</p> <p>OCS Staff: Sarah R. Sadowski, Executive Director; Sheree Isola, Fiscal Officer; Kristina Jordan, Technical Assistance and Training Specialist; Alyssa Mathieu and Milly Allen, Program Specialists</p>	

b. Opening Activity	Vice Chair Harbage led Commissioners and Lieutenant Governor in sharing proudest service experiences.	
c. Group Picture	Alyssa Mathieu took a group picture of the Zoom meeting.	
d. Approval of December 10, 2020 Minutes	Commissioner Margolis moved to approve the minutes, Commissioner Moses seconded. The motion was approved by acclamation.	December 10, 2020 Minutes approved
e. OCS Director Updates	<p>Director Sadowski delivered updates from ServeMontana, the Governor's Office of Community Service.</p> <p>Competitive grants were submitted in the new year. MLK Day of Service in mid-January was a success, and participating AmeriCorps programs (Justice For Montanans, Montana Campus Compact, Communities in Action Corps, VISTAs) completed numerous projects adapted to ensure COVID-19 safety.</p> <p>There are several staffing updates at OCS. The grants manager position vacated by Director Sadowski closes Sunday, March 13. Sheree Isola continues to help OCS part time as she transitions to DLI, where she will continue to support OCS in a new financial support role. Her fiscal officer position is currently posted. There has been an official change in title for Alyssa Mathieu and Milly Allen, who are now Program Specialists instead of Outreach Coordinators. This title better reflects the project management approach of OCS.</p> <p>In February, Director Sadowski met with Governor Greg Gianforte, Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras, and Chief of Staff Christine Heggem; OCS met with First Lady Susan Gianforte. Everyone is excited for the new priorities, which Lieutenant Governor Juras will detail later. These new priorities inform our upcoming State Service Plan. The current State Service Plan guides us through 2021.</p> <p>Formula grants are moving forward, and we are excited for the American Rescue Plan. The American Rescue Plan increases funding for AmeriCorps including community support grants, and increases the living stipend for service members. It is thrilling that the federal government understands national service can be a key part of America's recovery.</p> <p>Jono McKinney asked Director Sadowski if the stipend increase will take effect in fiscal year</p>	

	2022. Director Sadowski responded that an exact date is to be announced, but it may be in fiscal year 2021. Program staff will be kept in the loop.	
f. Commissioner Reports, Updates, and Volunteer Engagements	None.	
II. Executive Branch Updates	<p>Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras introduced herself and the Gianforte Administration's service priorities:</p> <p><i>Mental health and suicide:</i> Montana has the fourth highest suicide rate nationwide. Montanans of all backgrounds face this struggle and need prevention services and education.</p> <p><i>Drug epidemic:</i> a problem that is closely tied with mental health, and a priority shared by the First Lady. Rehabilitation is the goal, not incarceration.</p> <p><i>Rural communities:</i> expanding economic opportunity (especially to keep Montana graduates in Montana), as well as services like mental and physical health care, will maintain the vibrancy of Montana's rural communities.</p> <p><i>Tribal relations:</i> partnering with Tribal Nations in Montana is important, including supporting them with economic and mental health resources.</p> <p>Lieutenant Governor Juras stressed that these issues are connected. Addressing them holistically will create a brighter Montana for us all.</p>	
III. AmeriCorps the Agency Regional Office Update	<p>Amy Busch, Senior Portfolio Manager for the Mountain Region and ex-officio Commissioner, gave updates for the regional office.</p> <p>Commissioner Busch noted that Governor Gianforte's priorities align with service already in progress as well as opportunities to expand and extended her congratulations to Director Sadowski for her new position. She also thanked Sheree for continuing to work with OCS as they find a new fiscal officer, and congratulated AmeriCorps members present in honor of AmeriCorps Week.</p> <p>She is continuing to watch the progress of the American Rescue Plan; if passed and signed</p>	

	<p>into law, there will be new resources and additional support for extant programs.</p> <p>There are 61 AmeriCorps VISTAS in various organizations serving to alleviate poverty. Their terms start in January/February and July/August; she extended an invitation to the Lieutenant Governor and Governor to swear them in. Lieutenant Governor Juras responded that they'd love to do so. There is also a direct service summer associate VISTA program focusing on food security and mitigating learning loss.</p> <p>There continues to be a variety of opportunities for AmeriCorps Seniors to use their experience and knowledge through service. Currently there are augmentation grants to expand technology for remote service, ensuring these members (who are often in a COVID-19 vulnerable age group) can serve safely. Examples of current remote service include tutoring and foster grandparents reading.</p> <p>She will gather RSVP program directors together to network, creating a nationwide cohort of RSVP projects especially since there is a renewed interest in connection and service.</p>	
IV. Governors Office of Community Service Update		
a. ServeMontana		
<i>i. Youth ServeMontana Scholarships</i>	<p>Milly Allen, Program Specialist, gave final count for the scholarship as 91 eligible high school seniors. ServeMontana is happy to have so many engaged high schoolers supporting their communities through the challenges of COVID-19.</p> <p>The next step is to consult with scholarship partners, Montana Campus Compact and Reach Higher Montana, to identify current Montana college students who are eligible for the remaining nine scholarships.</p> <p>Director Sadowski added that this number comes after a deadline extension, from January 31 to February 28, and reducing the service hours from 100 to 50.</p>	

<i>ii. ServeMontana Awards</i>	Alyssa Mathieu, Program Specialist, gave updates on the 2021 ServeMontana Awards. Nominations are open, and OCS currently has 11 nominations. The form is linked via the website.	
<i>iii. Gift of Life Awards</i>	<p>Director Sadowski noted OCS' partnership with LifeCenter Northwest continues through this year's virtual Gift of Life Awards, honoring Montana organ donors and their families for the ultimate gift.</p> <p>It will take place online April 29, 2021 at 6pm MST. Governor Gianforte and Director Sadowski will contribute video messages to this event. April is National Donate Life Month, and an excellent time to express our solemn gratitude for Montana's organ donors.</p>	
<i>b. AmeriCorps</i>		
<i>i. Grants Update</i>	<p>Director Sadowski noted that competitive funding grants have been submitted. Formula grants will be submitted soon. OCS is also expecting planning grant applicants.</p> <p>Competitive grant funding will impact formula funding. Please share the formula planning grant with those who could benefit.</p> <p>Commissioner Moses asked for more details about the grants available through the American Rescue Plan. Director Sadowski responded that the details are forthcoming, but additional funding for AmeriCorps programs is always exciting news.</p> <p>Commissioner Busch added that this is an exciting opportunity to bring resources to people and places that need it. COVID-19 truly impacted everything, and there are myriad ways service can address these impacts and help America recover.</p>	
<i>ii. AmeriCorps Week</i>	Director Sadowski expressed excitement for AmeriCorps Week, especially as it coincides with the 12 th annual (and first virtual) ServeMontana Symposium. The drive for social media activity in honor of AmeriCorps Week enables us to test drive the federal Agency rebranding. Alyssa Mathieu has been key to rebranding efforts at OCS, and there will be new gear for Montana AmeriCorps programs soon.	

<i>iii. Engagement Opportunities</i>	<p>Director Sadowski, Alyssa Mathieu, and Kristina Jordan were able to join Montana Conservation Corps members in Helena; Director Sadowski led them in the AmeriCorps pledge.</p> <p>Director Sadowski invited Commissioners to attend the ServeMontana Symposium as they are able. She also asked for their assistance sharing the Gift of Life Awards and the ServeMontana Awards.</p>	
c. Financial	<p>Sheree Isola emailed the Fund Balance report to Commission. Data is still being compiled and she will give another update at the next meeting.</p> <p>Commissioner Honorarium is available to non-state employee Commissioners.</p>	
V. New Business	<p>Director Sadowski invited Commissioners to join the 2022-2024 Montana State Service Plan Workgroup. The plan will need to be complete by January 1, 2022. The workgroup will also craft a supplemental plan for AmeriCorps Seniors.</p> <p>The current State Service Plan has good objectives, goals, and strategies; the upcoming State Service Plan will have an additional component of increasing success measurements.</p>	Vice Chair Harbage and Commissioners Sylvester, Busch, Olsen-Billings, Margolis, and Moses volunteered for the State Service Plan Workgroup.
IV. Public Comment	Jono McKinney, via Zoom's chat feature, stated that Montana Conservation Corps is excited to partner with Governor Gianforte to discuss how MCC can align with the new priorities, especially tribal partnerships and engaging youth in meaningful service to offer hope.	
IV. Chairman Myhre adjourned the meeting at 11:24 am	The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting is Thursday, June 10, 2021.	

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